

## **CULCON Working Group on Developing Global Leaders US Proposal**

Much of CULCON's work has been based on the notion that a meaningful exchange of ideas between the citizens and institutions of the United States and Japan will enhance our nations' abilities to engage in a peaceful and prosperous bilateral relationship.

To this end, CULCON has taken up a wide agenda: it has worked to develop respective appreciation of the two countries, to encourage more translation, to improve the respective images of the two countries in each other's textbooks and media, to promote sharing of museum exhibits and documents, and to stimulate exchanges of educators, journalists and artists.

Awareness and knowledge of Japan is becoming mainstream in the United States. The number of elementary, high school and university students studying Japanese is increasing. Japan is increasingly considered a viable study abroad option for undergraduates, as evidenced by, for example, the CULCON Bridging Project initiative. CULCON's *Cross Currents* project is creating an innovative look at the interchange between the two countries that will be accessible to anyone worldwide with Internet access. Business, government, and academic professionals increasingly engage each other in independent consultations without the need for specialized intermediaries. The problems of cross-cultural communication are not solved by any means, but the infrastructure necessary to create a solid understanding, appreciation and respect of Japan in the United States and of the United States in Japan is maturing.

Our next step, then, is to explore CULCON's mission in a global context.

Globalization has brought with it both benefits and challenges. Arguably the most important benefit has been the growth of what may be called "the Global Common" – that space where interactions become understandings and where understandings become institutions to which everyone has access and from which everyone derives benefit. In the past, when we spoke of public goods, we usually limited ourselves to a national, bilateral, or regional context. Today, the institutions that provide public goods, e.g. communications, information, trade, human rights, development, etc., are more numerous than ever. And, importantly, they are developing a far more global reach than ever before.

As a consequence, social interactions within Japan, within the United States and between the two now have global impact; our cultural, educational, artistic and intellectual activities regularly meet on the Global Common.

But the implications of this evolving Global Common are not completely understood, nor are the ways in which we can most effectively shape it to enhance the bilateral relationship to produce truly global public goods.

For however much globalization expands possibilities for the provision of public goods, it also produces new challenges – especially for the United States and Japan. To some, globalization is a euphemism for unfettered US influence. To others, it is a Trojan horse filled with unfamiliar Japanese values.

CULCON, in its very makeup, represents a place where government has worked closely with the private sector for many years to address issues of binational importance. With CULCON encouragement, Japanese and Americans together have explored our cross-cultural relationship, including the essential role that grassroots organizations have played in past activities such as building bridges between our two cultures. Now, because we are each a leader in this larger Global Common, we must identify common means of communication and goals to help our citizens likewise participate in the Global Common. CULCON has an important potential leadership role to play in this effort.

To do so, there are several considerations. For example, how are US and Japanese citizens responding to being part of a larger world, both as individuals and as members of grassroots organizations and NGOs?

Or, for example, CULCON has amassed deep experience in helping our citizens learn to engage each other to produce a common good between Japan and the United States. Now, how can it draw on this experience and extrapolate it to use as models for educating our citizens who, in their individual capacities and as members of NGOs, are building civil society in the Global Common?

CULCON XXI will take place one month after the United States' reentry into UNESCO, where Japan has taken an active leadership role in recent years. Is cooperation in UNESCO a way for the United States and Japan to work together to educate citizens throughout the world who are building the Global Common?

The first task of the new Working Group will be to carry out a study based on the considerations above. Based on the results, the new Working Group would design concrete projects to develop aspects of the issues.